
The Vatican has reintroduced a system of clocking in, nearly fifty years after it was last phased out. Now, even senior clerics have to swipe plastic cards when entering and leaving, all in a drive to improve efficiency. From Rome here's Duncan Kennedy:

It was Pope John 23rd, fondly known as the Good Pope, who **phased out** clocking machines in the early 1960s. Now the Vatican has brought back a high-tech version.

Around 2,000 **lay** and **ecclesiastical staff** working in the tiny city state are using electronic **swipe cards**. The cards have been issued to everyone, from the lowest office staff to the heads of departments, even if they're priests and archbishops, though there's been no mention if the Pope carries one.

According to some reports, **elder clerics** in the Vatican have complained **clocking in and out** is **a headache**, especially when they have to leave **on pastoral duty**.

It's all part of a drive to increase efficiency and to make the Vatican more **meritocratic**. Next year there are plans **to introduce performance related pay**.

Duncan Kennedy, BBC News, Rome

Vocabulary and definitions

phased out	gradually removed
lay	belonging to or involved with a church while not being a priest
ecclesiastical staff	people belonging to or connected with the Christian religion, priests
swipe cards	a swipe card is a plastic card with magnetically stored data that is read by an electronic device as the card is passed through
elder clerics	senior priests
clocking in and out	recording the time of coming in to and leaving work
a headache	something that causes difficulties or complications
on pastoral duty	doing what is required of them as priests - but not in church
meritocratic	focussed on people's (here, staff's) abilities and achievements
to introduce performance related pay	to start paying more money to staff who achieve more at work or work better/harder

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